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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KU](#) [SA](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: ISCI COR LEADER HAMOUDI ON REGIONAL TRAVEL

REF: A. BAGHDAD 3849
[1](#)B. KUWAIT 1655

Classified By: Classified By Deputy Political Counselor Robert Waller f
or reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a wide-ranging discussion 11/25, influential Council of Representatives (CoR) Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Humam Hamoudi (ISCI bloc leader, Shia) expressed optimism about bilateral relations with Kuwait and Egypt, while noting several obstacles to further improving ties with Kuwait. Hamoudi accompanied Iraqi President Talabani on his mid-November regional tour (reftels). Hamoudi said he urged Saudi interlocutors to acknowledge the "Arabness" of Iraq, improve assistance to bordering Iraqi provinces and increase overall investment in Iraq. He complained that a meeting of foreign relations committees from neighboring states to be held in Baghdad, a follow-up to the Istanbul ministerial, was held up by Syrian demands it be held in Damascus. Discussion on Article 140 reported septel. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Hamoudi said the Iraqi and Kuwaiti sides linked Kuwaiti forgiveness of loans, Iraqi reparations to Kuwait as a percentage of oil revenue and boundary issues near Umm Qasr in discussions last week during President Talabani's regional tour. Kuwaiti interlocutors claimed internal problems related to the GOK forgiving Kuwaiti debtors were preventing movement on the GOK forgiving Iraqi debt. Dialogue is needed to sort out the Umm Qasr boundary problem, he said; the United Nations needs to repair boundary markers and compensation should be made to anyone displaced.

[1](#)3. (C) Hamoudi believes Kuwait is "supporting our democratic experience." He noted that the GOK appointed an Ambassador but he is not in Baghdad yet, nor does Iraq have an Ambassador nominated for Kuwait. He thought a shared statement between the two countries would be an useful way to revitalize bilateral relations. Hamoudi said a delegation from the Iraq-Kuwait friendship group in the Council of Representatives (COR) would travel to Kuwait in February.

[1](#)4. (C) In Saudi Arabia, Hamoudi said he made three main points to Saudi interlocutors to improve bilateral relations. King Abdullah should issue a statement acknowledging the "Arabness" of Iraq, in an effort to alleviate accusations that SAG only supports Iraqi Sunnis. Just as Iran and Turkey support neighboring Iraqi provinces on their borders, Saudi Arabia, too, should support neighboring provinces via oil, water and electricity provision. Finally, Saudi Arabia should increase investment in Iraq. In response to the King's offer of charitable aid, Hamoudi said the Iraqi side urged such aid to be channeled through the GOI or perhaps the Iraqi Red Crescent, and not through informal channels such as tribal leaders.

[1](#)5. (C) "We need more dialogue" with Saudi Arabia, Hamoudi asserted. He said that, given Saudi concerns about Iranian influence, he urged the Saudis to see for themselves what is

happening in Iraq. Hamoudi said he understood the SAG would establish an Embassy in Baghdad very soon, perhaps located close to the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

16. (C) Following up on the Istanbul Neighbors' Conference, Hamoudi said the commitment to hold a gathering of parliamentary foreign relations committees from Egypt, Turkey, Iran, Kuwait and Syria is being held up by Syria. While the agreement in Istanbul was to hold it in Baghdad, the Syrians want to hold it in Damascus. Hamoudi said he hoped the neighbors would overcome this obstacle to improved cooperation.

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